

ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM FY-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Project No.: PIP 12L

I. Project Title: Communications/Public Involvement Plan for Nonnative Fish Management

II. Bureau of Reclamation Agreement Number: R10PG40043

Project Period: Start date: 10/01/2006
End date: 09/30/2012
Reporting period end date: 9/30/2012
Is this the final report? Yes X No _____

III. Principal Investigator:

Debbie Felker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225
303-969-7322, ext. 227; Fax: 303-969-7327
debbie_felker@fws.gov

IV. Project Summary:

In 2012, the Recovery Program continued management actions to minimize or remove nonnative smallmouth bass and northern pike in sections of the Colorado, Duchesne, Green and Yampa rivers in the states of Colorado and Utah. In addition, a concerted effort was made with the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming to implement policies based on prevention of the introduction of nonnative fishes. The Recovery Program began to shift messages away from the focus on nonnative fish control to raising awareness of the importance of prevention. Fact sheets, questions/answers and news releases were updated and widely distributed. A public meeting was held in April. The Information and Education Committee worked with the Basinwide Nonnative Fish Strategy Workgroup to include outreach strategies in the draft plan.

Study Schedule:

Initial year: 2003
Final year: Duration of Recovery Program.

V. Relationship to RIPRAP:

**VI. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE
ENDANGERED FISHES AND THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.**

**VI. Accomplishment of FY 2012 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings
and Shortcomings:**

- Tactic: Develop and Promote Key Messages
Status: Key messages were reviewed and approved by Recovery Program partners and key principal investigators before the 2012 field season began. These messages remain the basis of all communication.
- Tactic: Maintain Active Communication with Members of Congress and their Staffs (Local and D.C.) and Local Elected Officials
Status: A news release and updated questions/answers and fact sheets were prepared and distributed in advance of field activities to key members of congress for both Colorado and Utah, and to local sheriffs and county commissioners in Rio Blanco, Mesa, Routt and Moffat counties in Colorado.
- Tactic: Actively Seek News Media Coverage of Nonnative Fish Management Actions and Public Meetings
Status: A news release, fact sheets and questions/answers were issued in the spring before field work began. The questions/answers were customized for the states of Colorado and Utah.
- Tactic: Identify and Seek Permission from Landowners to Access Their Property as Part of Recovery Actions
Status: Principal investigators sought permission on an as-needed basis.
- Tactic: Establish Local Spokeperson(s)
Status: Key people from the Recovery Program and agencies conducting the field work were identified to address news media inquiries. Their names and contact information were provided on all fact sheets and in the question/answer handouts.
- Tactic: Train Appropriate Staff/Volunteers Who Might Receive Questions from the Public and Congressional Staff
Status: The Recovery Program staff asked agencies involved with the nonnative fish management activities to brief their staff and volunteers about the nature of the work and who to direct inquiries to. To the best of our knowledge, this occurred.

Tactic: Participate in Angler Roundtables and/or Public Meetings
 Status: At the request of Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Recovery Program participated in a public meeting held April 4, in Rangely, Colorado.
 Attendees:
Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Ron Velarde, Dean Riggs, Harry Crockett, Terry Wygant, Kyle Battige, Tom Davies, Bill DeVergie, and Mike Porras
Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program: Tom Chart, Pat Martinez, Debbie Felker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Tildon Jones
General public: 19 people (including two Rio Blanco County sheriffs, a woman with two children working on a 4-H project, and a variety of adult men of varying ages.)
 Presenters gave the big picture about the endangered Colorado River fishes and what needs to be done to recover them – including providing certain flow conditions and reducing the threat of nonnative fishes. While not all in attendance support endangered fish recovery, participants were courteous and in general the feedback from the meeting was positive. Both CPW and the Recovery Program recommend holding these kinds of meetings again in the future.

Tactic: Post Information on Agency Websites
 Status: The Recovery Program, CDOW and UDWR posted a news release, questions/answers and fact sheets on their websites.

Tactic: Distribute Information to Fishing and River Guides/Sporting Goods Stores
 Status: Action Planning Team members and principal investigators continued to recommend that this strategy not be implemented. For this reason, this tactic was not included in the Nonnative Fish Management Outreach scope of work for 2010-2011 and beyond.

Tactic: Work with Dinosaur National Monument staff to prepare appropriate materials that explain this project to include with boat permit distribution.
 Status: Dinosaur National Monument continued to distribute a bookmark-size handout with boat permits. The handout explains the nature of the work and provides contact information. At the request of monument staff, endangered fish magnets and stickers were also provided.

Tactic: Publish Articles in Agency Publications
 Status: Information about nonnative fish management was included in the *Program Highlights 2011-2012* document and the Recovery Program's winter 11 *Swimming Upstream* newsletter.

Tactic: Provide outreach strategies to include in the draft Basinwide Nonnative Fish Strategy Plan

Status: A subcommittee of the I&E Committee worked with the Basinwide Nonnative Fish Strategy Workgroup to draft a chapter to include in the draft plan that provided general outreach strategies. The subcommittee members: Randy Hampton, Mark Hadley (later Brent Stettler), Leith Edgar, Kara Lamb and Debbie Felker) The I&E Committee provided edits to the draft chapter and it approved sending it back to the NNF workgroup for its consideration. This project took a change in direction toward the end of fiscal year 2012 and will the I&E Committee will become more involved with it again in FY 2013.

VII. Recommendations: In FY 2013, proactive communication efforts should continue in an effort to ensure that target audiences are well informed of nonnative fish management activities and why they are needed. The Recovery Program should continue to seek feedback from principal investigators regarding public reaction to research efforts and to solicit their ideas on ways to improve communication with target audiences.

The Recovery Program should continue to ask for support from Recovery Program partner agencies to help with outreach efforts, including placing information on agency websites, including articles in agency publications, and incorporating key messages whenever possible.

The Recovery Program should continue to work with state partners to hold public meetings when appropriate to inform the public about recovery efforts and why they are important.

VIII. Project Status: On-track and ongoing.

IX. FY 2012 Budget:

- A. Funds provided: \$ 5,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$ -0-
- C. Difference: \$ 5,000 (returned to Recovery Program budget)
- D. Percent of FY 11 work completed and projected costs to complete: 100%, none
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

X. Status of Data Submission: Not applicable.

XI. Signed: Debbie Felker
Information & Education Coordinator

December 11, 2012
Date